

# USDANEWS

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## Some New Guidance On The Use of Travel Charge Cards

*And Coming Soon: A Late Fee*

*by Ron Hall, Office of Communications*

**M**arch 1, 2000 has come and gone. But in its wake it left behind a revised governmentwide policy on the use by federal employees of government charge cards to pay for their official travel expenses.

Effective March 1, federal employees are required to use a government-issued travel charge card to pay for expenses related to official government travel.

Mary Andrasco, team leader for fiscal policy in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, noted that this revised policy is a result of provisions of the Travel and Transportation Reform Act of 1998.

"But there are some exceptions to the requirement," she pointed out. In fact, she noted that the original intent was that, governmentwide, virtually all federal employees would have to be issued a travel charge card, and then they would have to use that card for virtually all expenses incurred during official government travel.

"Frankly," she observed, "USDA felt that the mandatory issuance of travel charge cards to all employees was impractical, and would impose unreasonable burdens on our employees and agencies."

Accordingly, USDA specialists worked with staffers in the General Services Administration who were drafting the implementing regulations. "We wanted to help GSA ensure that the final regs proved more useful and implementable," Andrasco advised.

Pat Wensel, acting director of OCFO's Fiscal Policy Division, noted that GSA took into account the comments from USDA and from other sources and modified their original implementing regulations. "Then, here at USDA, we fine-tuned those implementing regulations even more, to suit our work environment," she explained.

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*"It's important that our 'Full-Cycle Lending' approach assures our customers that, if they received a Rural Development housing loan, then we'll be with them before, during, and after their home purchase," affirms Randy Shiflett (left), an RD home ownership specialist in Rutland, Vt. He and RD rural housing specialist Anita Rios Moore are discussing RD's 'Full-Cycle Lending' initiative on behalf of RD loan borrowers in the Granite State. Note the story on page 5.—PHOTO BY KRIS PEARSON*

## We're Helping Spread The Word To Fill Out 'Census 2000' Forms *Didn't Complete? Don't Complain*

*by Ron Hall, Office of Communications*

**"L**ast year millions of dollars were spent on emergency equipment. Unfortunately, some communities missed out on this money. Fill out your census form. This is your future. Don't leave it blank."

That's the voice-over message which accompanies a TV commercial that has been airing nationwide lately. It depicts firefighters attempting to battle an inferno—but suddenly their fire hoses begin to crack and buckle, and the flow of water through the hoses reduces to a trickle—while the fire continues unchecked.

The paid advertisement is sponsored by "Census 2000." That and similar ads also airing nationwide all convey the same message: it's in your own interest, as well as in the in-

terest of your local community, to fill out your 'Year 2000 U.S. Census Form' to help ensure that your local community receives its fair share of federal resources.

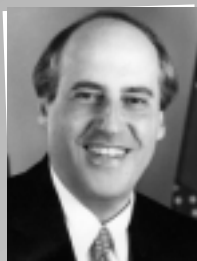
"It's especially important since that 'fair share' is determined, in large part, by the population of that very community," emphasized Marge Brining, a personnel management specialist in the Office of Human Resources Management. "So you should want that number to be as accurate as possible."

Brining is coordinator of USDA's Family-Friendly Work/Life Program, the purpose of which is to improve the work environment for USDA employees across the country. The January-February 2000 issue of the *USDA News* carried a story on that program.

She and several of the Department's family-friendly work/life coordinators at the agency level have recently been 'spreading the word' about the importance of filling out that Year 2000 U.S. Census form.

"I saw this as a family-friendly work/life activity," she explained, "because filling out the  
*continued on pg. 3...*

# Secretary Dan Glickman



**W**hile most of the nation enjoys nearly unprecedented prosperity, many of our farmers and ranchers find themselves in a daily struggle for survival.

Low prices, recession abroad, and natural disasters have all combined to devastate American agriculture over the last few years. This is a time when we need to pursue every new opportunity available to farmers, especially export opportunities.

Against this backdrop, Congress is preparing to decide whether to grant China Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR), a designation that would allow the United States to enjoy the benefits of China's prospective membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

China is home to one out of every five people on earth. Its economy is growing at a 7 percent annual clip. But a relatively closed Chinese market means that our farmers are not able to tap into the full strength of that consumer power.

During the last fiscal year, in fact, every man, woman, and child in China consumed less than a single dollar's worth of American agricultural goods. That is compared to \$22 a person in the European

Union and \$92 a person in Japan. The entire U.S.-China trade relationship is wildly out of balance, with China selling us five times more in total goods and services than we sell them.

In joining the WTO, however, the Chinese would agree to abide by the accepted rules of international trade. They would eliminate government export subsidies, which give their farmers an unfair advantage in the global marketplace. They would cut tariffs dramatically; in many cases, their tariffs would be lower than those assessed by our traditional trading partners.

All told, by 2005, China's membership in the WTO could mean an additional \$2 billion a year in U.S. farm exports.

The first question many Americans ask when our trade negotiators bring home a new agreement is: "What did we give up?" In the case of the China-WTO deal, the answer in this case is: "Absolutely nothing."

Unlike NAFTA, for example, where we had to give in order to get, all the concessions here are on the Chinese side. All the benefits are on ours. We have nothing to lose by passing PNTR or by bringing China into the WTO.

Perhaps more importantly, we have everything to lose by rejecting it. A no vote on PNTR is a vote for a kind of unilateral

economic disarmament. American farmers and workers would lose the opportunity for increased sales and potential new jobs, while our competitors in the European Union, Canada, Australia, Japan, Latin America, and elsewhere fill those orders.

Increased trade with China does not mean acceptance of its governing regime and political philosophy. But by bringing them into the global economic community and exposing them to our values, we can influence them. If we help China become a more open economy, eventually they will become a more open society.

There is more at stake here than dollars and cents. We cannot call ourselves the world's only superpower if we disengage from the world's most populous nation just as it is preparing to institute wholesale political, economic, and social reforms. Also, China is a nuclear power that holds the key to peace and stability in Asia. It is absolutely folly to isolate ourselves from such an emerging global power. For our national security as well as our economic security, we must engage China.

The decision about PNTR may be the biggest test yet of our nation's commitment both to the global economy and to global security in the 21st century. It is imperative that we pass the test by passing PNTR. ♦

## Travel Charge Cards...continued from pg. 1

The net result: USDA has exempted certain categories of employees from the requirement of having to have a travel charge card. According to OCFO staff accountant **Lester Pitts**, USDA's exemptions include employees who do not expect to travel more than twice a year, intermittent and/or seasonal employees, and employees who have had their travel charge cards canceled for cause.

In turn, Pitts noted that there are certain official travel expenses which don't need to be charged on the travel charge card. They include out-of-pocket expenses such as for parking, taxicabs, tips, and laundry or dry cleaning; telephone calls; and expenses covered by the 'meals and incidental expenses' portion of the federal per diem allowance.

"Let's be practical," he advised. "For some official travel expenses, it's just more convenient for the employee to pay cash or use a check."

Pitts added that such official travel-related

expenses as airline or train tickets, motel costs, and rental car expenses must be paid for using the travel charge card.

Andrasco pointed out that there is an additional provision of the 1998 Act which could benefit employees. "Many employees in government objected to mandatory use of a travel charge card because they said that their department or agency didn't reimburse them promptly for those official travel expenses," she said. "Accordingly, the Act now requires agencies to pay employees a late fee, if a valid claim for travel reimbursement has not been paid within 30 days of when the approving official received that claim."

**Dale Theurer**, OCFO team leader for cash and debt management, noted that OCFO's Fiscal Policy Division staff is working with specialists at the National Finance Center in New Orleans to finalize the procedures for implementing this 'late fee' provision. "I anticipate that it will be in place by this sum-

mer," he said.

Actually, the use of travel charge cards to pay for official government travel is not something new. In fact, Andrasco said, they have been in use within USDA since 1983. The April-May 1996 issue of the *USDA News* carried a story on delinquent payments of balances on official travel charge cards.

"But the difference with these revised regulations," she explained, "is that the use of the travel charge card is now mandatory, except for the exemptions we've mentioned."

"Travel charge cards assist our employees so they don't have to carry excess cash, or use their own personal credit cards, while they're on official government business," Andrasco advised.

"These revised rules provide specific guidance so that our employees no longer have to guess about whether they should have a travel charge card—and, if they do, what expenses they have to charge on it." ♦

## Here's How We Can Help You To Set Up Shop At HQ In DC

So, you're a USDA field employee, *AND* you're on travel status, *AND* you've just arrived at USDA headquarters in Washington, DC, as part of a five-day workshop your agency is coordinating, *AND* you brought with you some job-related assignments that you need to work on while you're there, *SO* you're looking for an empty office where you can borrow a computer, a printer, a fax machine, a copier, a telephone, and an e-mail hookup to send some of your completed work back to your home office—*BUT* you can't find any empty offices, *AND* you don't want to disturb any of your agency colleagues at HQ who are immersed in their own assignments—*SO* you just give up and bag the whole idea of getting that extra work done while away from your home base.

BUMMER!

AND—these days—unnecessary.

That's because the Department recently opened a fully-equipped, alternate work site for use by both HQ and field employees of participating agencies while away from their official duty stations or primary offices. It's called the Telework Center, and it's located in the Department's George Washington Carver facility in Beltsville, Md.

## Administrative



According to **Esther Edwards**, acting manager of the Center with the Office of Operations, it consists of two rooms.

One room has 14 individual workstations with computers and three workstations available for employees to plug in laptop computers they may have brought with them.

"The second room," she explained, "is set up for use by short term task groups and/or special project groups of 90 days or less."

This 'Task Room' offers a private office, one secretarial station, 10 individual workstations with computers, two workstations for employees with laptops, and a combination fax machine, copier, and printer.

In addition, she noted, two of the workstations within the Center are set up with features to accommodate employees with disabilities. That includes "JAWS," or "Jet Access With Speech," which is a software package

that reads on-screen text and turns it into speech for visually impaired users; a keyboard with Braille imprint labels on the keys; "Zoom Text" software that offers enlarged print on the computer screen; and workstations that are hydraulically height-adjustable to accommodate wheelchairs.

"My staff developed a single-sheet reference guide to help Esther ensure that the equipment in those two workstations is used properly and to its maximum advantage," said **Ophelia Falls**. She is director of USDA's TARGET Center, which helps USDA offices obtain equipment that can provide 'reasonable accommodation' in the USDA workplace for employees with disabilities.

"USDA's Telework Center has the capacity to accommodate up to 33 people," Edwards noted.

She added that the Carver facility is currently accessible to USDA's HQ in Washington, DC by a combination of subway and shuttle bus, and parking is also available.

Edwards said that arrangements for using the Center can be made by calling (301) 504-3783 or e-mail at [gwctelework@usda.gov](mailto:gwctelework@usda.gov)

"We're currently not charging our employees to use USDA's Telework Center," she affirmed. ♦

*'Census 2000' Forms...continued from pg. 1*

census forms helps get a community its fair share of federal dollars."

"That's important because, of course, our 93,000-plus USDA employees live in those communities around the country—especially in rural America."

"So," she affirmed, "if we can help our employees help their neighborhoods, especially rural neighborhoods, then we're all better off—and that's good for employee morale."

Accordingly, Brining and the coordinators helped to distribute various posters to USDA field offices around the country. A typical poster, titled "Census 2000: Don't Be Missed!" was one of many created by the U.S. Census Bureau, which is responsible for administering the census. "The census posters provide guidance on how to fill out the census forms and where to send them," explained **Wendy Veney**, the work/life coordinator for the Forest Service.

**Denise Coleman**, the work/life coordinator for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said she faced a unique challenge trying to reach APHIS employees at various international airports and seaports in this country. "So I mailed out the various posters to APHIS's

25 work/life field representatives around the country," she said. "I asked them to post the posters in highly-trafficked spots at airports and seaports—so that not only our employees but also travelers would get the message."

OHHR personnel assistant **Constance Smith** noted that the Year 2000 U.S. Census forms began being distributed to households around the country in mid-March, and are to be completed and returned by April 1, which the Census Bureau refers to as "Census Day."

But this is not the first time that USDA employees have been involved in Census 2000 activities. Brining served as USDA's contact to the Census Bureau in 1998 when it began its effort to recruit federal employees to help out in the 2000 census.

"Back then, the Census Bureau saw a potential hiring problem for Census 2000," she recounted.

"So it devised a plan to hire federal employees for paid assignments—as census takers, or 'enumerators,' as well as crew leaders, office clerks, recruiting assistants, and office operations supervisors—which would be short-term and temporary, and in which most work would be conducted in the evenings and on week-

ends, during 1998, 1999, and 2000."

The October 1998 issue of the **USDA News** carried a story about USDA's involvement in that effort.

Brining reported that she subsequently received a number of inquiries from employees, especially from those at field locations, who expressed an interest in participating.

"And, in fact," she affirmed, "Census Bureau officials recently advised me that over 1,800 USDA employees ultimately applied to be involved in various aspects of Census 2000." She noted that this included 323 USDA employees working with the Census Bureau's region out of Dallas, 317 out of Seattle, 278 out of Denver, 245 out of Atlanta, 183 out of Kansas City, 134 out of Chicago, 123 out of Philadelphia, 70 out of Charlotte, 57 out of Detroit, 45 out of Boston, 44 out of Los Angeles, and 25 out of New York City.

"Here's how I see the bottom line," Brining concluded. "If you don't fill out that Census 2000 form, then don't complain if your local community isn't allocated its accurate share of federal bucks!"

"Wow," she then quipped. "Did that come across as too harsh?" ♦





## Marketing and Regulatory Programs

### Fighting Animal Disease In Turkey

On August 17, 1999, a devastating earthquake, measuring 7.4 on the Richter scale, struck northwestern Turkey, killing more than 17,000 people. That was followed by a second, equally powerful earthquake in November, in the same general area, that took more than 500 lives.

The destruction took an immeasurable toll on the citizens of Turkey. But more than just people were affected by the deadly quakes.

Animals and livestock suffered as well.

As Turkey begins to rebuild, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service has offered to help that country combat foot-and-mouth disease, a highly communicable viral disease affecting cattle and swine.

Although foot-and-mouth disease was already present in Turkey, efforts to eradicate the disease were put on hold while the nation worked to bury its dead, house its homeless, and rebuild in the wake of the quakes.

"Already existing animal diseases tend to be exacerbated by natural disasters because attention and resources are redirected to more immediate survival needs," said **Dan Sheesley**, associate deputy administrator for APHIS's International Services staff.

APHIS officials have been to Turkey twice since the August earthquake. The first visit was a fact-finding mission to see where APHIS could best offer its services. The agency's three-member team spent several days touring the devastation less than two weeks after the first earthquake hit.

"We toured urban and rural areas and destruction was everywhere," recounted **Chris Groocock**, a veterinarian with APHIS's International Services staff stationed in Vienna, Austria and a member of that team. "The full impact of the quake was still unfolding at that time."

By the time of a second visit in December by another team from APHIS, Turkish officials had completed a more comprehensive damage assessment—including what disease-prevention infrastructure had been damaged or destroyed because of the quakes—and asked for assistance to combat outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease.

Accordingly, APHIS team members visited Turkey's Foot-And-Mouth Disease Institute, located in Ankara, and offered more long-range, post-earthquake suggestions, such as how Turkey could improve the quality of its

## Employees make these things...

# HAPPEN!

vaccine and boost the Institute's quality control program.

"The goal is to help Turkey make improvements in its eradication program that will provide long-term benefits in its fight against foot-and-mouth disease," emphasized **Juan Lubroth**. He is head of reagents and vaccine services at APHIS's Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at Plum Island, N.Y., and was a member of the December team, along with **Bob Miller**, chief staff veterinarian for mammalian virology and antibody products with APHIS's Center for Veterinary Biologics-Licensing and Policy Development in Ames, Iowa.

Lubroth advised that before the earthquake in August, Turkey had an increasing problem with foot-and-mouth disease near Gebeze in northwestern Turkey, in the general region of the earthquakes. "Efforts to suppress that outbreak are considered critical to Turkey's Agricultural Ministry—and may threaten Europe," he advised.

Lubroth said that Turkey needs about \$100,000 to \$150,000 to purchase the necessary equipment to make improvements in the Institute's foot-and-mouth disease laboratory and receive training in the latest quality assurance and quality control techniques. "Turkish scientists working on foot-and-mouth disease eradication could come to the U.S. to be trained at APHIS facilities," he added, "and we'd be happy to train them here."

Sheesley noted that specialists from APHIS's International Services staff continue to work with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations to provide funding for the equipment and the training. In addition, APHIS is looking into several other funding sources.

"Turkish officials are very appreciative of our efforts," Sheesley affirmed. "We're hoping it all comes together."

—**HALLIE PICKHARDT**



## Natural Resources and Environment

### While Using A Pint-Sized Grip...

WHEW! It was definitely a busy January on the Winema National Forest in south-central Oregon, because—for the sixth year in a row—Forest Service employees on the Chemult Ranger District were heavily involved in pulling off the annual Chemult Sled Dog Races.

But the best race of all might have been the "PeeWee race."

The larger races—involving the 'big people'—included over 700 spectators watching 71 teams of sled dogs and drivers racing through the snowy woods of the Chemult Ranger District during January 29-30. According to **Judith Parker**, FS's recreation program manager on the Chemult Ranger District who has helped to coordinate all six Sled Dog Races, the location is a great place for a sled dog race.

"It's located high in the Cascade Mountains where the snow piles deep each winter," she explained. "And it's 62 miles from the nearest city, so the dogs can run without meeting a lot of skiers and snowmobilers."



FS's **Mary Erickson** (left) gives an affectionate headpat to one of the four-legged participants in the upcoming 'PeeWee sled race.' Later...



...a pint-sized participant in the 'PeeWee race' gets to experience 300 feet worth of riding on a real dog sled—pulled by a real race dog.

—**PHOTOS BY FRANK ERICKSON, STEPHEN FISHER**

Making the race happen involved FS personnel—who administered the required special use permit and who served as volunteers during the races—as well as three sled dog clubs, four snowmobile clubs, Klamath County's search and rescue team, a non-profit race association, and a local bank.

**Jim Wolfe**, an FS sale administrator on the Chemult Ranger District, served as 'Trails Boss' and ensured the miles of trail used in all the events were safe, cleared, and compacted.

**Mary Erickson**, deputy forest supervisor on the Winema National Forest, based in Klamath Falls, Ore., said that most of the events were sprint races. "Teams of four, six, or eight dogs—generally always huskies—raced four, six, or eight miles," she noted. "There were also 20- and 30-mile races for bigger teams of dogs."

At the command "go," the dogs leaped forward to the shouts of Hike! Hike! "Unlike the cartoons," quipped Parker, "nobody here ever says 'Mush!'"

But the best race might have been the least serious one. Parker explained that youngsters at the races got a chance to take a short sled dog ride with a dog. This was called the "PeeWee race."

"It was for kids 12 and under, and it involved a 300-foot dash on a real racing sled, pulled by a single dog," she said.

Parker explained that each participating youngster rode on the runners of the sled. "Some of them could barely reach the top bar of the sled," she laughed. "Yet they'd hang on to that bar with a pint-sized death grip, as the dog pulled the sled slowly down the track."

Parker emphasized that they appreciated the effort by the mushers to donate the 30-plus dogs for the PeeWee race—which were generally older and mellower, not younger and friskier.

Erickson, who collected the names of the 'PeeWee participants' and kept track that 50 youngsters—the cutoff number—had a chance to do a run, said that the PeeWee race was the one time in the whole two-day event where the spectators could get directly involved. "People came up to me and asked incredulously 'You mean that the mushers will loan us a dog for this event, and I don't have to put a race harness on our family pet to let my kid participate?'"

"And then," she quipped, "I asked my husband, 'should we train our dog Molly to pull a dog sled, for next year's PeeWee race?'"

"We may be developing future adult racers," she speculated, "from one of these brief—but very special—experiences with the kids."

—RON HALL



## Rural Development

### "Full-Cycle Lending" In Vermont

When clients seek information about a Rural Development housing loan in Vermont, they get more than just an application to fill out.

Instead, RD home ownership specialists in that state offer their clients a special service known as "Full-Cycle Lending." According to **Bob McDonald**, the Montpelier-based director of rural housing programs in Vermont, "RD has entered into a partnership with five private sector, non-profit HomeOwnership Centers in Vermont to offer this service—which highlights the importance of working with customers before, during, and after a home purchase in order to support the long-term stability of the borrower."

The partnership between RD and the five HomeOwnership Centers started in Rutland, Vt., in 1995. **Michael Dolce**, at the time an RD county supervisor for Rutland County, Vt., and now an RD community and business outreach specialist in Rutland, recalled that "many customers who did *not* qualify for a housing finance program with one of the non-profit groups *did* qualify for an RD loan—and vice versa."

Accordingly, he and **David Dangler**, executive director of the non-profit Rutland West Neighborhood Housing Services, initiated a cooperative cross-referral between RD and that non-profit group. In turn, that group consolidated its services into a HomeOwnership Center, and began to offer workshops to potential homebuyers, adopting the "Full-Cycle Lending" concept.

"I then took the next step," Dolce recounted, "and made presentations on the RD housing programs at the HomeOwnership Center workshops."

"I saw 'Full-Cycle Lending' as a way to help our customer become a successful homebuyer and to help ensure the success of our RD loans," said **Roberta Harold**, RD state director for Vermont, based in Montpelier. "I requested that Rutland West Neighborhood Housing Services give a training session on 'Full-Cycle Lending' to all of the RD housing staff in Vermont."

The final impetus to the formation of RD's present partnership with the HomeOwnership Centers was the reduction of RD staff and funds in the state. "It became very apparent that the best way to serve the customer with limited staff was to share staffing resources," stated Harold.

"Our RD home ownership specialists now work one to three days a week at the HomeOwnership Centers," McDonald said.

"They counsel clients, discuss different funding options, and make referrals to private sector and non-profit lending agencies—and are also permanent presenters at the homebuyer workshops given monthly by the HomeOwnership Centers."

"Our five HomeOwnership Centers in Vermont are as strong and productive as they are because of the Rural Development staff," emphasized Dangler. "I believe that Vermont is the only state where RD employees are physically located in a HomeOwnership Center."

That's all well and good—but just what exactly happens in these counseling sessions which include RD specialists?

"A client learns about the process of buying a home, finding the right home, negotiating a deal on the home, and working with realtors and attorneys," said **Randy Shiflett**, an RD home ownership specialist based in Rutland.

Following a homebuyer orientation session, the client attends a one-on-one counseling session at the HomeOwnership Center, where he/she meets with an RD home ownership specialist or a HomeOwnership Center counselor to discuss his/her loan application.

"If the client is eligible for a housing loan," explained Shiflett, "all funding resources are discussed to decide which is the best for the borrower. Educating clients about funding sources other than those from RD assures that RD's limited funding allocation is used only for clients who cannot get financing elsewhere."

"We help the client find the best loan for his or her situation," he added. "No longer do clients have to make a decision that will affect the rest of their lives without help and guidance."

"The service RD now offers its clients is more encompassing than what it offered in the past," McDonald observed. "We now strive for our customers to get homeownership education and counseling before they make a financial offer on a home."

"Even when we have to deny an application, the client is counseled on what to do to become a successful applicant," McDonald added. "Because of this, we've seen a significant drop in the number of appeals of adverse decisions."

As part of the "Full-Cycle Lending" approach, contact with the borrower does *not* stop with the closing of the loan. "Our staff, working with the HomeOwnership Centers, is always available to help homeowners with budgeting concerns, homeownership responsibilities, and other matters that ensure they'll be able to stay in their home," said McDonald.

"This last step in 'full-cycle lending' is as important to RD as it is to the client. A successful borrower means that our security is protected."

—CAROLYN LAWRENCE



**Joe Leo** was named as USDA's Chief Information Officer. He succeeded **Anne Reed**, who was the Department's first CIO. Reed began in that position as acting CIO in August 1996. One year later in August 1997 she was officially named USDA's CIO, and held that position until leaving USDA in February 2000, following 18 years of federal service. She is now based in Herndon, Va., as vice president of the Government Global Industry Group at Electronic Data Systems, an information technology firm.

From 1984 until his official appointment in January 2000, Leo served as deputy administrator for management in the Food and Nutrition Service, where he was responsible for information technology, human resources, procurement, and administrative services. During that time, from March 1998 until October 1998 he also led the planning team for administrative convergence for the county-based agencies in USDA. He then served as acting executive director of the implementation of USDA's [then] Support Services Bureau from March 1999 until October 1999.

Leo also served as chair of USDA's Advanced Planning Document Committee, which provides executive oversight on all

## Editor's Roundup

### USDA people in the news

major state-initiated computer system acquisitions for the administration of FNS's food assistance programs, from 1985-2000.

From 1971-84 Leo held various positions at the U.S. Department of Transportation, all based in Washington, DC. They included serving as administrative officer to the contracting officer of DOT's Federal Highway Administration from 1971-76, working as the senior highway analyst in the Office of the Secretary at DOT from 1977-78, serving as chief of the Aviation and Research Division in the Office of the Secretary at DOT from 1979-82, and serving as deputy associate administrator for administration and general manager for automated systems with DOT's [then] Urban Mass Transportation Administration from 1982-84.

A native of Clifton, N.J., Leo holds a B.A. degree in political science from Western Illinois University and an M.A. degree in science policy from Purdue University in Lafayette, Ind. ♦



**Jim Hunt** was selected as Chief Administrative Law Judge with USDA's Office of Administrative Law Judges. He succeeded **Victor Palmer**, who served in that position from 1987 until he

retired in January 1999 with 31 years of service at USDA, and who is now the director of attorney and paralegal recruitment with Palmer Legal Staffing, based in Washington, DC. Administrative Law Judge **Edwin Bernstein** served as acting chief ALJ from January to April 1999, and Administrative Law Judge **Dorothea Baker** served as acting chief ALJ from May to October 1999.

From 1989 until his recent selection Hunt served as an administrative law judge with USDA. He was an administrative law judge with the Social Security Administration's Office of Hearings and Appeals, first in Philadelphia and then in Washington, DC, from 1980-89. From 1972-80 he worked as an attorney in private practice with the firm of Barton, Lambeth and Hunt, based in Washington, DC, where he concentrated on employment law.

Hunt served as director of corporate labor relations with the Atlantic Research/Susquehanna Corporation, based in Alexandria, Va., from 1967-72, after having worked as counsel and manager of the Labor Relations Department at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, based in Washington, DC, from 1964-67. From 1958-64 he was an attorney advisor to the chair of the National Labor Relations Board, based in Washington, DC. He served on active duty as an infantry officer in the U.S. Army from 1953-55.

Hunt authored "The Law of the Workplace: Rights of Employers and Employees" in 1986, and then authored an updated second edition in 1992. He also authored "Employer's Guide to Labor Relations" in 1974. Both books were published by the Bureau of National Affairs in the private sector.

A native of Morgantown, W.Va., Hunt holds a B.A. degree in history and political science and a law degree, both from the University of West Virginia. ♦



**Dorothy Caldwell** was appointed as deputy administrator for special nutrition programs in the Food and Nutrition Service. She succeeded **Ed Cooney**, who held that position



"I've tested this and it works just fine," concludes **Terry Cagle** (left), an NRCS realty/contract specialist. She and **Esther Edwards**, acting manager of USDA's Telework Center in Beltsville, Md., are making sure that a software package to help visually impaired employees is functioning correctly at one of the workstations in the Center. Note the story on page 3.—**PHOTO BY EDWARD HICKS**



from September 1997 until November 1999, and who now serves as the special assistant for nutrition to Secretary **Dan Glickman**.

From September 1997 until her recent appointment Caldwell served as the special assistant for nutrition and nutrition education to Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services **Shirley Watkins**. From 1988-1997 she was director of child nutrition for the Arkansas Department of Education, based in Little Rock. She served as director of food and nutrition for the Lee County, Ark., School District, based in Marianna, Ark., from 1968-88. Since she had worked in those two field-level positions, she becomes the first person ever to serve as deputy administrator for special nutrition programs who has administered FNS programs at both the state and local levels.

During her tenure in Arkansas Caldwell was the lead author for the chapter on school nutrition in a book on coordinated school health, titled "Health Is Academic," ultimately published in February 1999 by Teacher's College Press. She was also the author of a chapter on nutrition integrity in a book titled "Managing Child Nutrition Programs: Leadership for Excellence," ultimately published in June 1999 by Aspen Publishers. She taught home economics at a public high school in Marianna, Ark., from 1956-58.

From 1993-94 Caldwell served as president of the American School Food Service Association, based in Washington, DC. She served as president of the School Food Service Foundation, also based in Washington, DC, from 1994-95.

A native of Cotton Plant, Ark., Caldwell holds a B.S. degree in home economics from the University of Arkansas and an M.S. degree in food systems administration from the University of Tennessee. She is a registered and licensed dietitian. ♦



It was a contest that combined the outdoor skills of **Robinson Crusoe** with the wild 'n crazy flair of **Bart Simpson**. But **Bart Pals** came away the winner—and lived to tell about it.

Pals, a district conservationist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service based in Effingham, Ill., garnered the title of Illinois Sportsman of the Year late last year. "And no, I didn't have to live in the wilderness, pick my teeth with a hunting knife, or kill a wild animal and then skin and eat it for survival," he quipped.

But he did have to compete in several out-

door events, plus succeed on a written test. Oh, and then there was the weird stuff.

According to **Paige Buck**, a public affairs specialist with the NRCS state office in Champaign, Ill., Pals won three individual events. They included rifle shooting—in which he hit paper targets of animals at various distances with a .22-caliber rifle—rod casting—in which he had to cast his lure into hoops at various distances in a lake—and wildlife identification—a written test in which he was required to identify casts of animal footprints in the woods and slides of animals and birds in motion.

He also competed in shooting shotgun slugs at paper targets of deer, skeet shooting, flyfish casting, identification of slides of types of fish and other aquatic species, archery—using three-dimensional foam targets of wildlife—and a written test covering trapping and conservation law.

And how did the 26 contestants prepare for this 'outdoor decathlon' of sorts, which was sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources?

"For the skills events, you can prepare just by practicing them or doing them," Pals advised. "But on the written and identification tests, you either know it or you don't."

At least that's the normal game plan for the events that are fairly predictable from year to year. But then there's the notorious 'Final Event' that's 'anybody's guess.' This year it involved the use of fluffy "flu-flu" archery techniques.

"We were each issued an archery bow and five gaudy 'flu-flu' arrows with oversized feathers," he recounted. "Our job was to hit styro-foam plates from 20 yards away—as the plates were being tossed into a fierce wind."

And how did Pals do in that particular event? "Let's just say it's a good thing I scored high in most of the other contests," he laughed.

Pals noted that in previous years' contests, the 'Final Event' included backing a trailer-hitched boat between an obstacle course of pylons; constructing a fishing lure out of feathers, hooks, beads, thread, and glue—and then

catch a fish with it; having to boil water within a certain amount of time, after being issued a bucket of water and three matches—but it was 'round up your own kindling'; and using a hunting knife to carve a slingshot out of a forked tree branch—and then hit a paper target with it.

"And hey, I was right up there—at least on some of those Final Events," he recalled.

So, what did Pals do with the \$1,500 first-place prize?

"Big shock," he quipped. "I bought some more hunting and fishing equipment." ♦

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## Letters

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This "Letters" section is an opportunity for USDA employees to communicate with Sec. **Dan Glickman**, through questions or comments, on matters that would be appropriate and of general interest to USDA employees across the country. He invites employees to use this particular forum in the **USDA News** to communicate with him, by using the following mailing address: "Letters," Sec. Dan Glickman, USDA, STOP #0190, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250.



**Nick Gutierrez** (left), deputy director of APHIS's Europe/Africa Region, based in Brussels, Belgium, shares observations with **Chris Groocock**, an APHIS veterinarian based in Vienna, Austria, as they stand in front of a building in Golcuk, Turkey that was destroyed by an earthquake which struck there last August. They were part of a fact-finding mission to see where APHIS could best offer its services. A second severe quake hit that region in November. As Turkey begins to rebuild, APHIS has offered to help it combat foot-and-mouth-disease—especially since Turkey's disease-prevention infrastructure had suffered quake damage. Note the story on page 4.—**PHOTO BY DALE NOELTY**



HELP US FIND

### **Tameka Gunter**

Missing: 12-09-98

From: New York, NY

D.O.B. 5-28-83

Sex: Female

Hair: Black

Eyes: Black

Height: 5 ft. 3 in.

Weight: 110 lbs.

If you have information, please call

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NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

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